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Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4188

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 5263

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SCUL, IN
SUBJ: AMBASSADOR' S CALL ON MINISTER OF EDUCATION

1. I CALLED YESTERDAY ON DR. NURAL HASAN, THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION WHO HAS BEEN GIVING US SUCH DIFFICULTIES IN RECENT YEARS. HE IS AN URBANE AND EDUCATED ARISTOCRAT, A D. PHIL FROM OXFORD, AN HISTORIAN, AT ONCE MARXIST AND, WITH RESPECT TO THE INDIAN TECHNOLOGICAL HISTORY REVISIONIST. WE HAD A THOROUGHLY PLEASANT HOUR TOGETHER WITH ME DISCUSSING THE RESURGENT REPUTATION OF MARXIST HISTORIANS, AS AGAINST ECONOMISTS, IN THE UNITED STATES, AND URGING HIM TO READ GENOPESE. THIS MAY HAVE PUZZLED HIM A BIT. A PROBLEM OUT HERE IS THAT THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT IS RUN LARGELY BY PEOPLE WHO ARE SOCIALLY SEVERAL NOTCHES, AND FIFTEEN GENERATIONS SUPERIOR TO THE YANKS WITH WHOM THEY DEAL. THIS MAKES ALL THE MORE ANNOYING TO THEM THE UNAVOIDABLE FACT THAT THE YANKS SEEM TO RUN A MORE SUCCESSFUL SOCIETY. CONFUSION REIGNS NO MATTER. I AM NOT THE SOCIAL EQUAL OF MR. HASAN, BUT I AM JUST AS WELL EDUCATED AND THE POINT WAS SEEMINGLY ACCEPTED BY HIM.

2. FOR SOME TIME I HAVE BEEN GETTING REPORTS THAT HASAN WOULD LIKE TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES. HE DOES. AND WHAT IS MORE KNOWS EXACTLY WHERE HE WANTS TO GO. HE WILL BE ARRIVING AT KENNEDY IN THE FIRST WEEK OF JULY, AND WOULD LIKE TO VISIT WASHINGTON, CAMBRIDGE, CHICAGO, AND EITHER LOS ANGELES OR SAN FRANCISCO BEFORE TRAVELING ON TO AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
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IN MEXICO. HIS PRIMARY INTEREST IS TO VISIT UNIVERSITIES IN THOSE CITIES. HE SEEMS TO ME MODERATELY WELL ACQUAINTED BUT WOULD LIKE TO BECOME MORE SO. I SAID TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT VERY WELL BE POSSIBLE FOR US TO ARRANGE HIS TRAVEL, AND THAT I WOULD LET HIM KNOW, ALTHOUGH I COULD MAKE NO COMMITMENT.

3. IF THE DEPARTMENT ORDINARILY DOES THINGS LIKE THIS, I WOULD SEE NO HARM IN SHOWING HASAN AROUND. HE MAY NOT BE ANTI-AMERICAN AS I HAD BEEN TOLD. IT APPEARS THAT DURING THE 1950' S HE WAS DENIED A VISA ON ACCOUNT OF BEING A COMMUNIST OR SOMETHING AND THIS, OF COURSE, RANKLES. WHILST AT THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN 1971, HE GOT IN TOUCH WITH PRESIDENT MARSCHAK AT CITY UNIVER-SITY, TO TALK OF THEIR SHARED INSTITUTIONAL PROBLEMS. HE TELLS ME HE IS GOING TO ASK MARSCHAK TO COME OUT HERE TO CONSULT WITH HIM AS SOON AS THE UNIVERSITY SECTIONS OF THE FIFTH PLAN IS READY. ANY MAN WHO WANTS TO CONSULT MARSCHAK CAN' T BE ALL BAD.

4. MY PRIMARY REASON FOR RECOMMENDING THAT WE DO SOMETHING FOR HIM, HOWEVER, IS THAT HE NEEDS TO GET IT FIRST HAND FROM AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA IS DESTROYING A PRECIOUS ASSET BY CLOSING OUT AMERICAN STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS. HE PUT IT TO ME, AND PROPERLY, THAT WHAT INDIA WANTS IS RESPECT FOR INDIAN UNIVERSITIES. I DON' T BLAME THEM AS IT IS CLEAR THAT WITH PL-480 MANIA AND MISSIONARY PRESUMPTION, THIRD, FOURTH AND FIFTH CLASS AMERICANS WERE ROAMING UP AND DOWN INDIA DURING THE 1960' S, THROWING AROUND MONEY AND INFLUENCE, AND MAKING A POOR IMPRESSION. ON THE OTHER HAND, THESE TYPES HAVE QUITE DISAPPEARED AS THE MONEY HAS DRIED UP AND THOSE WHO CONTINUE AT SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES ARE IN GENERAL VERY HIGHLY QUALIFIED SCHOLARS AND CITIZENS. FOR THEM THE PROBLEM OF RESPECTING INDIAN UNIVERSITIES LIES IN THE FACT THAT MOST INDIAN UNIVERSITIES ARE NOT PARTICULARLY RESPECTABLE. BY ALL REPORTS MOST HAVE ABANDONED THEIR INTELLECTUAL OR INSTITUTIONAL

INTEGRITY. I KNOW THIS TO BE THE OPINION OF SOUTH ASIAN SCHOLARS IN THE UNITED STATES BUT THE HASANS OF INDIA NEED TO HEAR IT FROM OUR PEOPLE. IN THE OTHER DIRECTION, OUR PEOPLE NEED TO COME MORE DIRECTLY IN CONTACT WITH THE FACT THAT IT IS INDIAN OFFICIALS IN DELHI WHO ARE GIVING THEM TROUBLE AND NOT THE MEAN MEN OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE OR THE NEW DELHI EMBASSY.
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TO BE SPECIFIC, I THINK IT IS IN THE PRESIDENT' S INTEREST THAT AMERICAN SCHOLARS COME DIRECTLY IN CONTACT WITH HASAN.

5. WHAT DO YOU, WHOEVER YOU ARE, THINK?
MOYNIHAN

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